



State of Connecticut
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March 6, 2012

Reps. Taborsak, Baram and Rebimbas, Sens. Doyle, Leone and Witkos and Members of the General Law Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 5306-AN ACT REQUIRING THE LICENSING OF CERTAIN LANDSCAPING COMPANIES.

The genesis of this bill began with a discussion I continue to have with a Mr. Daniel Moura who is constituent of mine and is the owner of a landscaping and irrigation company. Mr. Moura had planned to testify today but is out of state on a long planned trip. I have attached a letter he drafted that expresses some of his concerns.

I want to briefly add that while I acknowledge this is not the first time this concept had been proposed it merits discussion for many of the reasons that Mr. Moura detailed. Both he and I recognize that many young people and some older adults mow lawns for extra money. Our interest in asking for this bill to be raised was not our concern with the previously mentioned individuals but the numerous individuals who are providing lawn-mowing services while giving the appearance that they are a licensed business. As Mr. Moura notes there are tax implications as well as consumer protection concerns with individuals operating vehicles with company names on them, owning and operating commercial mowers and making what could be considerable amounts of money but do not pay the appropriate taxes or liability insurance. The concept you have raised allows for a discussion to take place.

I thank you for raising this concept and for providing me the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Daniel M. Mason, Jr.

March 5, 2012

To: *Sirs and Madams,*

I am writing in support of the Landscaping Licensing Bill brought up in front of you all. There are many reasons for my support and continued efforts in seeing this become law. But as there is a time constraint I will limit them to the most important ones here with my written testimony.

First I would like to draw attention to one reason as being lost state tax revenue. This bill would require that all persons currently (or planning in the future) to register with the state dept. of consumer protection and as well the dept. of revenue services. These persons that provide landscaping services to include lawn maintenance are providing these taxable services and would be required to turn those tax dollars into the state. Now some may think that there may not be enough of these persons currently unlicensed out there to justify this bill. However, my associates and myself have done a brief study in our area of east Hartford, Manchester, and Glastonbury areas and within a three week span, we found a multitude of unlicensed landscape providers. Many of whom were advertising as professional landscape / lawn maintenance providers and also were advertising that they were licensed which we found to be false. We also found that many of these persons were doing an average of 50 - 60 accounts per week. Now the average lawn ranges from \$30 - \$35 dollars per week with a tax of \$1.91 to \$2.22 per lawn. So on a 60 lawn provider the tax collected averages from \$114.60 to \$133.20 per week from just one of these unlicensed providers. So after adding up all those across the state we are talking about millions of dollars per year lost. In that small period we even found that some providers were actually collecting unemployment benefits from the state while providing these services and not reporting their income. There are also other avenues of lost revenue tied in here as well, such as incorrectly registered motor vehicles, unreported personal property taxes and lost municipal taxes as well.

Secondly, this bill would protect the states taxpayers. In that same time frame in which we did our research, we found a lot of these service providers advertising or using cell phones as their business contact number. We also found that a lot of these providers have created or caused damage to consumers either by fraud or property damage, but when the consumer only has a cell phone number that was then changed or disconnected, the consumer than has no recourse on recovering their losses and because the service provider was not registered with the dept of consumer protection, they definitely have no recourse or protection. I must remind you that the average commercial mower goes up to 14 mph and can shoot out projectiles up to 50' so damage and / or injury is not all that rare.

So in closing, I would like to once again reiterate that there are many additional reasons for my support to this bill. The ones listed above are just a few. I have submitted some photos as well of these unlicensed service providers and you can clearly judge for yourselves on why the tax payers of Connecticut should have some level of protection and recourse. I thank you all for your time and I apologize for my absence but I have an engagement previously planned out of state. I also would like to thank Mr. Rojas for working on this with us and for his time and attention to this matter. Once again I thank you all for your time.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized 'R' or 'M' with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Signature

